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APPLICATION FOR LETTERS PATENT FOR:

MULTIPLAYER BOARD GAME AND METHOD OF PLAY THAT UTILIZES
CHESS PIECES

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MULTIPLAYER BOARD GAME AND METHOD OF PLAY THAT
UTILIZES CHESS PIECES

5 RELATED APPLICATIONS

This application claims priority of Provisional Patent No. 24020, filed September 04, 2002, entitled Four Player Chess Type Board Game.

10 BACKGROUND OF THE INVENTION

1. FIELD OF THE INVENTION

The present invention relates to board games, such as chess. More specifically, the present invention relates to board games that use chess pieces but are not played using the traditional rules of chess.

15 2. DESCRIPTION OF THE PRIOR ART

Forms of the game of chess have been played for over a thousand years and is one of the oldest board games still being played today. Although the rules of chess have varied over the centuries, chess is traditionally played on a checkered board consisting of sixty-four squares. The game of chess is played by

two players, wherein each player has sixteen chess pieces.

There are chess tournaments, chess clubs, chess teams and many other less formal gatherings of people 5 for the purpose of playing chess. The one disadvantage that chess has over other board games is that only two people can play one chess game. As such, if an odd number of people gather to play chess, one person must wait for an available partner. Chess is a game of 10 strategy between two players. Accordingly, the rules of the game have evolved so that they do not provide either player with an advantage.

Chess is played on a chessboard. Over the years, variations of the traditional chessboard have been 15 made that enable more than two people to play chess at the same time on the same board. Most of these prior art variations enlarge the size of the game board so that it contains more than sixty-four squares. Such prior art variations are exemplified by U.S. Patent 20 No. 6,416,056 to Knieriemen, entitled Chess Game For Multiple Players, and U.S. Patent No. 6,170,826 to

Jones, entitled Three Person Chess Game and Method Of Play.

A problem associated with allowing more than two players to play chess on a single chessboard is that
5 the first players to play often appear to have an advantage over the last players to play. For example, if four players are playing on a common board, the first player has an open field to place a game piece. The fourth player has to contend with three opponents' pieces. By the time the fourth player has a second turn, six opponent moves have occurred on the game board. Since chess is largely a game of strategic game piece placement, the last players are clearly at a competitive disadvantage in the game.

15 The present invention is a new board game that can have more than two players and utilizes chess game pieces. However, the present invention game is played in two stages. In a first stage, the rules of chess are not followed. Rather, unique game rules are followed until one player declares chess. The unique game rules do not provide any one of the multiple 20 players with an advantage. Once chess is declared, the

remaining players, who meet certain requirements, then follow the rules of chess. In this way, any number of players can play the game without any competitive advantage or disadvantage. The structure and rules of play for the present invention game are described and claimed below.

SUMMARY OF THE INVENTION

10 The present invention is a board game assembly and its associated method of play. The board game assembly contains a game board that is divided into different areas. Playing spaces are on the game board and extend throughout the various areas.

15 Each player is provided with a set of chess pieces that are randomly set upon the game board using shuffled placement cards. Each player uses the chess game pieces to attempt to gain control of the various areas on the game board. The chess game pieces move 20 according to traditional rules of chess piece movement.

As the game is played, the chess pieces are moved throughout the game board. Furthermore, players may be eliminated during this first level of play. Once one player obtains control of a majority of the areas on the game board, that player can declare chess. Once chess is declared, a second level of play begins and the rules of the game change. Utilizing the remaining chess pieces that are on the board, the remaining players play traditional chess with those chess pieces. The winner of the chess match wins the game.

As such, it will be understood that the present invention board game assembly has two levels of play. At first, the game is played with a unique set of rules that are designed to distribute game pieces throughout the game board. After specific criteria are met, the game reverts to a traditional chess match using the game pieces remaining on the game board.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

For a better understanding of the present invention, reference is made to the following description of an exemplary embodiment thereof,

considered in conjunction with the accompanying drawings, in which:

5 Fig. 1 is a perspective view of an exemplary embodiment of the present invention board game assembly;

Fig. 2 is a plan view of the game board shown in Fig. 1;

10 Fig. 3 shows the types of cards used in the deck of placement cards in accordance with the present invention;

15 Fig. 4 shows the type of cards used in the deck of control cards in accordance with the present invention;

20 Fig. 5 is a block diagram showing an overview of the preferred method of play;

Fig. 6 is a block diagram showing the substeps contained in the first method step block of Fig. 5; and

5 Fig. 7 is a block diagram that shows the substeps contained in the second method step block of Fig. 5.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

10 The present invention is a game where part of the object of the game is to gain control of a majority of areas on the game board or all of the corresponding ownership cards. As such, the game board itself can have many motifs, provided the motif selected has 15 different areas that can be obtained during play. In the shown illustrations, the present invention game device is provided with a space motif, where players try to obtain control of areas of the game board corresponding to planets. However, it should be 20 understood that other motifs, such as different continents, different countries or different parts of a battlefield can be used. The illustrated motif

should therefore only be considered an example of one embodiment of the present invention game device and should not be considered a limitation on the scope of the game as claimed.

5 Referring to Fig. 1, an exemplary embodiment of the board game assembly 10 is shown. The board game assembly 10 contains a game board 12. Game pieces 14 are provided. The game pieces 14 are chess pieces. Each player of the game is provided with a full set of 10 chess pieces, which includes eight pawns, two knights, two rooks, two bishops, a king and a queen. Although only one set of game pieces 14 is shown in Fig. 1, it should be understood that up to four sets of game pieces 14 can be used for up to four players, wherein 15 each player will be provided with game pieces 14 of a different color. As such, it will be understood that if four players are playing the present invention game, there will be sixty-four game pieces 14 used on the game board 12.

20 Two decks of cards are used in the play of the board game assembly 10. One deck consists of placement cards 16. The placement cards 16 are used to place the

game pieces 14 on the game board 12, as will later be explained. Since there are a maximum of sixty-four game pieces 14 provided, there are sixty-four placement cards 16, wherein there is one placement card for each game piece 14.

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The second deck of cards contains ownership cards 18. The ownership cards 18 contain indicia that correspond to different themed areas of the game board 12. The ownership cards 18 are used as players gain control of different themed areas on the game board 12, as will later be explained with the method of play.

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The present invention board game assembly 10 is also provided with a random number generator 20, such as dice, a timer 22 and play money 24. The use of these game elements is later explained with the method of play.

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Referring to Fig. 2, it can be seen that the game board 12 is comprised of square playing spaces 26 arranged in parallel columns and rows. In the center of the game board 12 is a first demarcation line 28 that defines the perimeter of a first play area of

squares 30. This first play area of squares 30 is in the center of the game board 12. The first play area of squares 30 is positioned in the center of the game board 12 and has an area of eight squares by eight squares. As such, this central first play area of squares 30 consists of sixty-four squares, as does a standard chessboard or checkerboard.

A second demarcation line 32 is used to define the perimeter of a second play area of squares 34. This second play area of squares 34 is larger than the first play area of squares 30, wherein the first play area of squares 30 is located within the second play area of squares 34. The second play area of squares 34 has an area of ten squares by ten squares, thus containing one hundred squares.

The periphery of the game board 12 itself is larger than that of the second play area of squares 34. In the shown embodiment, the game board 12 consists of fourteen squares by fourteen squares. However, such a size is merely exemplary and it should be understood that larger numbers of squares can be used.

On the game board 12 is an indicia that defines the game board 12 into a plurality of different themed areas 40. In the shown embodiment, the game board is divided into nine different themed areas 40 that correspond to the nine planets of the solar system.

5 However, such a delineation pattern is merely exemplary for the shown motif. Any plurality of themed areas 40 can be present on the game board 12 and the themed areas 40 can be defined by colors, shapes, country outlines, or any other visual indicator that

10 is desired.

Within each of the different themed areas 40 present on the game board 12, are a plurality of specialty spaces. These specialty spaces include control spaces 42 and safety spaces 44. Some of the themed areas 40 also contain short-cut spaces 46. Free move spaces 48 are also provided, however, the free move spaces are preferably not associated with any of the themed areas 40. In the shown embodiment, control spaces 42 are shown by solid circles, safety spaces 44 are shown by annular circles. The free move spaces 48 are shown by comets.

Any number of short-cut spaces 46 can be used, but in the shown embodiment only four are present. In the shown embodiment, the four short-cut spaces 46 are in four different themed areas 40 and all the short cut spaces 46 are within the confines of the first play area of squares 30.

5 The identifying symbols for the various specialty spaces are merely exemplary and it should be understood that any other set of identifying signals 10 can be used provided the symbols are consistence across the game board 12.

Referring to Fig. 3, it can be seen that the deck 15 of placement cards 16 contains three different card types. Most of the placement cards 16 are ordinary placement cards 50. An ordinary placement card 50 contains an image 52 of a themed area and an indication 54 of a space type. For example, in Fig. 3, a first card is shown having an image 52 corresponding to the themed area of earth and a space type indicia 20 54 of a control space. Other ordinary placement cards 50 in the deck of placement cards have indicia of

other themed areas with both space type indicia 54 for both safety spaces and control spaces.

In addition to the ordinary placement cards 50, the placement card deck 16 also contains three free move cards 56. In the embodiment of the game board shown in Fig. 2, there are three free move spaces 48 (Fig. 2). Each of these free move spaces is identified with a comet. The deck of placement cards 16 contains one free move card 56 for each free move space on the game board. Consequently, in the shown embodiment, three free move cards 56 are in the placement card deck 16. The placement cards are provided with an indicia 58 that identifies them as free move cards 56. The free move cards 56 are also provided with a secondary indicia 59 that identifies the free move cards 56 as also being safety spaces.

15 In the deck of placement cards 16 are also contained short-cut cards 60. In the embodiment of the present invention game board shown in Fig. 2, there are four short-cut spaces 46 (Fig. 2). Each of these spaces is identified with an eclipse. The deck of placement cards 16 contains one short-cut card 60 for

each short-cut space on the game board. Consequently, in the shown embodiment, four short-cut cards 60 are in the placement card deck 16. The short-cut cards 60 are provided with an indicia 62 that identifies them 5 as short-cut cards 60.

Referring to Fig. 4, a deck of ownership cards 18 is shown. The deck of ownership cards 18 contains cards with indicia 64 that correspond to the themed areas 40 (Fig. 2) on the game board. One card for each 10 themed area is provided for each of the players. In Fig. 2, there are nine themed areas corresponding to the nine planets of the solar system. As such, in the deck of ownership cards 18, there is one card corresponding to each planet for each player.

Now that the physical components of the present invention game assembly have been described, the method of play can be explained. Referring to Fig. 5, an overview of the method of play is provided. In a first step, the board game assembly is set up for 20 play. See Block 70. After set up, the board game assembly is played by multiple players using a first set of unique rules. See Block 80. This first level of

play is continued until certain game conditions occur.

See Block 90. Once the game conditions occur, the rules of the game change and the game is played using standard chess rules with the exception of castling

5 and empasant. See Block 100. The purpose of the first level of play is to mix the game up so that all of the players change the position of their game pieces and

lose game pieces prior to the rules of chess being followed. The first level of play is also used to

10 eliminate players if more than two players are playing. In this manner, when the second level of play occurs and the rules of chess are followed, none of the players that remain have a strategic advantage over the others resulting from their original order of

15 play.

From Fig. 5, it can be seen that the first step in the method of play is to set up the game. See Block 70. The rules for setting up the game are explained best by referring to the substeps of this method step set forth now in Fig. 6. Referring to Fig. 6, it can be seen that the step of setting up the game 70 includes the substep of providing each of the players

with starting requirements to play the game 72. Each player is provided with a set of chess game pieces 14 (Fig. 1) of a unique color. Each player is also provided with a predetermined amount of play money 24 (Fig. 1). Each player is then dealt a set of ownership cards 18 (Fig. 1). As has been previously explained, the ownership cards contain one card for each of the themed areas for each player. In the shown embodiment, there are nine themed areas. As such, each of the 10 players is dealt nine ownership cards, wherein each of the ownership cards corresponds to a different themed area.

The placement cards 16 (Fig. 1) are shuffled and randomly dealt to the players. Each player is dealt 15 sixteen cards to correspond to the sixteen game pieces that each player has. As has previously been explained, the placement cards contain ordinary placement cards, short-cut cards and free turn cards.

Referring to Block 74 in Fig. 6, it can be seen 20 that after each player is provided with the game requirements, the players set their game pieces 14 (Fig. 1) on the game board 12 (Fig. 2). The placement

of the game pieces on the game board depends upon the placement cards 16 (Fig. 1) that the player was dealt. A player places the game pieces on the game board in places corresponding to the places shown on the game cards. For instance, if a player was dealt a placement card 16 (Fig. 1) that shows a safety space 44 (Fig. 2) in a particular themed area 40 (Fig. 2), that player can place a game piece on a safety space in that themed area.

10 There are some special rules that govern the placement of game pieces by the players. First, the "king" game piece must be placed within the confines of the first play area of squares 30 (Fig. 2) if less than three players are playing. If more than three 15 players are playing, the "king" game piece must be set within the confines of the second play area of squares 34 (Fig. 2). The exact position of the "king" game piece is determined by the first placement card drawn that shows a space within these defined areas.

20 After the "king" playing pieces are set, the "pawn" playing pieces are set. The "pawn" playing pieces are placed within the first ten rows from that player's

side of the game board 12 (Fig. 2) if two players are playing. If three or more players are playing, the "pawn" game pieces must be set in the first eleven rows. Again, the placement of the "pawn" game pieces 5 is determined by the indicia on the placement cards 16 (Fig. 3).

After the "pawn" game pieces are set, the "bishop" game pieces are set. After the "bishop" game pieces are set, the remaining game pieces are set at 10 the player's choice. Since each player is dealt sixteen placement cards 16 (Fig. 3) that contain regular placement cards, free move cards and short-cut cards, each player will place game pieces on the game board in the ordinary spaces 42, 44 (Fig. 2), free move spaces 48 (Fig. 2) and short-cut spaces 46 (Fig. 15 2).

After the board game assembly is set up and the players are ready to play, the game is played using a first set of rules that do not conform to the 20 conventional rules of chess. See Block 80 in Fig. 5. With reference to the game board 12 in Fig. 2, it will be understood that the object of the game in this

first level of play is to control a majority of the themed areas 40. A themed area 40 can be controlled when a player has game pieces on a majority of the control spaces 42 in that area. For example, if a 5 themed area 40 has six control spaces 42 in that area, the first player with game pieces on four of the six control spaces 42 has control of that themed area 40. Some of the themed areas 40 have an even number of control spaces 42. If the control spaces 42 are evenly 10 divided between two players, the player who owns two of the safety spaces 44 in that themed area 40 wins control.

15 The game is played with the first rules of play until one player controls a majority of the themed areas 40.

Referring to Fig. 7, it can be seen that the substeps needed to play the game with the first rules of play include each player taking turns moving their game pieces. See Block 82. Game pieces are moved using 20 standard chess rules for each of the pieces. For example, bishops can only move diagonally. A queen can move in any direction, etc. If a player lands a game

piece on a short-cut space 46 (Fig. 2), they can move their game piece to any of the other short-cut spaces as part of that same turn.

From Block 84 in Fig. 7, it can be seen that the players move their pieces in an attempt to take control of the various themed areas 40 (Fig. 2) on the game board. To take control of a themed area, a player must place a game piece on a majority of control spaces 42 (Fig. 2) contained within that themed area.

Game pieces move around and eliminate opponent game pieces using the known game piece movement rules of chess. However, if a game piece is on a safety space 44 (Fig. 2), it cannot be attacked. Furthermore, if a game piece is on a safety space, it cannot attack another's piece from that position. Safety spaces are safe. Attack moves cannot be launched from or received on these spaces.

As the game progresses, players lose pieces as those pieces are attacked by other players. During any turn, a player can purchase additional pawns using the play money distributed at the start of the game. If a player successfully advances a pawn to the opposite

side of the game board from the position of that player, that player can convert the pawn into any other game piece previously lost. This transformation of a pawn into another lost piece follows the 5 traditional rules of chess.

Once a player has game pieces on a majority of the control spaces in a themed area, that person can declare control of that themed area. When a person declares control of a themed area, they can eliminate 10 other player's pieces within that themed area by moving and capturing those pieces in chess fashion.

When all of the control spaces within a themed area are covered by a single player, that player can claim ownership of that area. At this time, the player turns 15 over the ownership card or cards for that themed area and receives the monetary value of that themed area from the bank, using the play money 24 (Fig. 1).

If during the course of play a player loses his/her "king" game piece, that player is out of the 20 game and must remove all of his/her playing pieces from the game board.

As is indicated by Block 86 in Fig. 7, the game is played using the first set of rules until a player controls a majority of the themed areas contained on the game board. Once this is accomplished, a player 5 must also move all their remaining game pieces within either the first play area of squares 30 (Fig. 2) or the second play area of squares 34 (Fig. 2), depending upon the number of players playing the game. As is indicated by Block 88, other criteria may optionally 10 be set. For example a player may be required to have at least two bishops remaining, or a knight and a bishop, etc.

Once a player controls a majority of the themed areas and meets the other conditions, that player can 15 advance the game. See Block 90 in Fig. 5.

To advance the game, a player can declare chess. Once a player declares chess, the first set of game rules no longer apply and only the rules of chess apply. See Block 100 in Fig. 5. Players therefore can no longer 20 utilize safety spaces, short-cut spaces and cannot buy additional pawns. If a player has a game piece that is not within a field of play when chess is declared,

that player can move the piece into the field in a subsequent turn.

The game is played using the rules of chess until a winner is determined. See Block 110 in Fig. 5. In the case of a chess draw, the player with the most 5 money wins.

Secondary rules of play can be used to make the game more challenging, faster and/or more interesting.

For instance, players can be given time limits to 10 play, using the timer 22 (Fig. 1) provided.

Furthermore, various chess pieces can be allowed to move in abnormal manners if fees are paid with the play money. For example, a fee may be set to move a pawn diagonally during play. All such rule 15 modifications and alterations are intended to be included within the general framework of the rules of play.

It will be understood that the embodiment of the present invention game and method of play that is described and illustrated herein are merely exemplary 20 and a person skilled in the art can make many variations to the embodiment shown without departing

from the scope of the present invention. For example, the rules regarding play prior to declaring chess can be altered in many ways. What remains constant is that a game of luck and skill is played that eliminates 5 multiple players until the remaining players can play chess. All such variations, modifications and alternate embodiments are intended to be included within the scope of the present invention as defined by the appended claims.

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